

these examples makes sense, as the columnist from Iowa said, but yesterday the Judiciary Committee chair came up with another one. Listen to this one. This is classic. Senator GRASSLEY said he will not consider Merrick Garland's nomination because the hearing would be a waste of taxpayer dollars.

Well, we could have a hearing, we aren't going to have a hearing, but let's just suppose we did have a hearing. . . . So you have a hearing and you spend a lot of taxpayers' money gearing up for it, you spend a lot of time of members, a lot of research that has to be done by staff.

That is kind of a strange comment. Staff is not paid by the hour. They are paid each day. I would hope they could squeeze into their busy schedules enough time to look at a Supreme Court nominee. Offering our advice and consent on the Supreme Court nomination is what the taxpayers want us to do. Look at polls all over America. That is our job.

I find it ridiculous—there is probably a better description—but I find it ridiculous that the very Senator who continues to use the Judiciary Committee to wage a political war on former Secretary Hillary Clinton dares to claim he is trying to save taxpayer dollars. Where is he, where is his concern for misusing taxpayer funds while his committee continues to waste millions of dollars on partisan opposition research of a Presidential candidate? That is not their job.

Where was the penny-pinching when the Judiciary Committee used Senate funds and Senate staff to investigate former Clinton staffers; for example, asking for maternity leave records—maternity leave records—time sheets, anything they could to try to embarrass Secretary Clinton.

Where is Senator GRASSLEY's focus on government waste while the so-called Benghazi Select Committee continues to spend millions and millions of dollars on a political hit job with no end in sight? Every day the Judiciary Committee has a new excuse, a new justification for why it will not do its job. I think we all have news for the Senator from Iowa: No one is buying it.

They are not buying it in Iowa. They are not buying it in Nevada. They are not buying it in New York. They are not buying it in Kentucky. They are not buying it anywhere. The American people are not buying it. His own constituents are leading the pack of people who are not buying this. His behavior reminds me of a Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem: "It takes less time to do the right thing than it does to explain why you did it wrong."

So the senior Senator from Iowa has spent months trying to explain away the obstruction of a Supreme Court nominee. Wouldn't it be easier to give him a hearing and a vote? Wouldn't it be easier for him to just do his job? Wouldn't it be the right thing to do to just do his job?

Mr. President, I ask the Chair to announce to everyone what the Senate is going to do the rest of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

ENERGY POLICY MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2012, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2012) to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Who yields time?

If no one yields time, time will be discharged equally to both sides.

The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, we are about to vote on the Energy Modernization Act of 2016. I know my colleague, the chairwoman of the committee from Alaska, will probably like to close debate. So I would like to take a few minutes before that vote this morning to again thank all of our colleagues for their diligent consideration of this legislation.

We will be passing the first Energy bill since 2007. This Energy bill will be the first one in 9 years. It is a modernization of our energy system that is so desperately needed because it focuses on cleaner, more efficient, more renewable sources of energy that is more cost-effective for the consumer. It does this by modernizing the grid, making investments in advanced storage technology, smart buildings, composite materials, and vehicle batteries. It improves cyber security and helps plan for the workforce we need for tomorrow.

I urge my colleagues to make sure this legislation passes. I want to say that yesterday, we substantially improved this legislation—particularly with the inclusion of both the public lands package that includes the Yakima River Basin Bill from the State of Washington; as well as the bipartisan SAVE Act—which will help homeowners recognize the investments they make in energy efficiency so they can benefit from it when they are ready to sell their homes.

I think yesterday's efforts helped improve this legislation, but all of this would not be possible without the staff and the support of so many people. I thank Angela Becker-Dippman, Sam Fowler, David Brooks, Rebecca Bonner, Rosemarie Calabro Tully, John Davis, Benjamin Drake, David Gillers, Rich Glick, Spencer Gray, Sa'Rah Hamm, Aisha Johnson, Faye Matthews, Scott McKee, Casey Neal, Bryan Petit, David Poyer, Betsy Rosenblatt, Sam Siegler, Bradley Sinkaus, Carolyn Sloan, Rory Stanley, Melanie Stansbury, Al

Stayman, Nick Sutter, Stephanie Teich-McGoldrick, Brie Van Cleve, and of course I thank Colin Hayes and Karen Billups from the majority staff who have worked so hard on this legislation as well.

As I said, the improvements we are making in this bill help us reach the goals that have been outlined in the Quadrennial Energy Review. Department of Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz helped us on this legislation, clearly calling for the type of 21st century energy infrastructure investments that will help our country remain economically competitive in the future. It also will help us train the 1.5 million new workers we will need, over the next 15 years.

I should say, one of the provisions we were so happy to defeat amendments on yesterday was preserving the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is one of the preeminent programs in our country for preserving open space at a time when our country continues to develop. It has been a program that has nurtured that very important need for all of us to be outdoors, and it has also helped to build an outdoor economy.

So we are saying to the American public this is a program we believe should be made permanent, particularly after last September's lapse and successfully renewing it for just a couple of years. It is time to say the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a program that has been around since the 1960s, should be made permanent.

I thank everyone again for their work on this legislation. I hope we get a resounding vote out of the Senate and a quick conference with the House of Representatives so we can plan for America's energy future in a more effective, streamlined way, and we can then realize the opportunity to help our businesses and consumers plan for the energy future.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, in the very short time we have before the vote is called, I have just a few comments this morning. We have completed our work on a bill that includes more than 350 amendments that were filed to this broad, bipartisan bill. We have accepted a total now of 65 of those amendments.

This bill contains priorities from over 80 Members of this body. Not everything has been smooth. I think we recognize that. I think this bill has shown that the Senate does work, the Senate can work cooperatively, that they can work toward a bipartisan product that will produce long-lasting